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Early Warnings of Media Monopoly Ignored

By Michael Collins Piper

Nearly a hundred years ago, independent voices were already raising concerns about the growing monopoly over the press and the then-newly-emerging broad cast industry. Did nobody pay them heed?

Imagine how Sen. Robert M. LaFollette (R-Wis.) and British money reformer Hilaire Belloc would react, were they living today, if they saw the ever-tightening control by a handful of interlocking families and financial groups over the major newspapers, magazines, television and radio, and now the Internet. These forceful, outspoken tribunes of liberty recognized the need for curtailing the growth and power of the media monopoly and the forces behind it.

LaFollette — who lived from 1855 to 1925 — wrote in 1920 of what he called the "sinister influence" of the media and its behind-the-scenes monopolists when he described the press as "the servant of the combined groups which control big business . . . [which] habitually misrepresents the facts . . . suppresses news [and] is unreliable on all issues involving public interest as against private monopoly."

For daring to point out these realities, LaFollette was called a "communist," a "socialist" and an "enemy of capitalism" when, in fact, he was an old-fashioned populist in the tradition of Thomas Jefferson —- who was, of course, called a "radical" and "revolutionary" by his own critics in the big money elite of his day.

Referring to the potency of the printed lie when "artfully and persistently repeated," LaFollette spoke of "deadly half-truths" and "doctored" news and "all of the various and multiplied forms of spurious, deceptive fabrications" he said were "willfully and wickedly printed from day to day" by what he called "the kept press." And yet despite the fact that many were aware of the danger, this controlled media, he said, was still "the most powerful influence for evil" menacing the American republic. "The power that controls the press controls the American market," he concluded.

But LaFollette wasn't only talking about the print media. In May 1924 — the year he took on both the Democrats and the Republicans as the presidential candidate of the Progressive Party — he warned of the financial oligarchy, already having gained control of much of the nation's wealth — "now reaching out to control the instruments by which the people amuse and educate themselves and by which they communicate with one another." Calling this the "monopoly of the air," he referred to the new novelty of radio but this would ultimately include motion pictures, television and now the Internet.

By 1938, when Belloc (1870-1953) was writing in *Social Justice* — the widely-circulated newspaper of Father Charles Coughlin, then perhaps America's most influential critic of the Federal Reserve banking monopoly — things had gotten progressively worse as far as media control was concerned.

Belloc wrote of the "tendency to monopoly" in the realm of information distribution and noted that this tendency was "increasing under our eyes," such that "when the few who control the mass of the press . . . agree to say nothing about some important matter, it is very difficult indeed to get the matter ventilated." In short, he said, "the monopoly of information through the power to control the press and radio is most dangerous to society when it is used to boycott facts."

However, Belloc saw an alternative to the media monopoly — a counterbalance — that he referred to as "the free press." Even with "quite small circulation," Belloc noted, "a little free weekly journal" will "often have the power to break down a most formidable ring of silence, or falsehood." And there was also, he said, "private conversation" passing on the information received by those who read that "free press." Such information, Belloc noted, "spreads out in circles."

It's no coincidence that LaFollette thought likewise.

"It is doubtful," LaFollette said, "if the American people can ever emancipate themselves from the merciless exploitation of the colossal monopoly which controls markets and prices until they shall establish a free and independent press."

Right now — in your hands — you hold the antidote to financial and media monopoly that Belloc and LaFollette recognized as a danger and to which they offered a solution: A very real "free press."

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Don't let the monopolists prevail.

Michael Collins Piper is the author of ***Final Judgment***, the controversial "underground bestseller" documenting the collaboration of Israeli intelligence in the assassination of John F. Kennedy. He is also the author of ***The New Babylon***, ***The High Priests of War***, ***The New Jerusalem: Zionist Power in America*** , ***The Judas Goats: The Enemy Within***, ***Dirty Secrets: Crime, Conspiracy & Cover-Up in the 20th Century***, ***The GOLEM: Israel's Hell Bomb***, and ***Target: Traficant.*** These works can be found at America First Books and First Amendment Books: 1-888-699-NEWS. He has lectured on suppressed topics in places as diverse as Malaysia, Japan, Canada, Russia and Abu Dhabi.

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